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Official Records

Disarmament Commission

339th meeting

Tuesday, 8 April 2014, 10 a.m.

New York

Chair: Mr. Drobnjak . . . . . (Croatia)

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

General debate (*continued*)

Mr. Montaño (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): Since the Commission last met, there have been several landmark events on the disarmament and non-proliferation scene that have set a pattern for the value of multilateralism as the principle under which we must build new agreements in order to achieve a safer and peaceful world. The Open-ended Working Group to develop proposals to take forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations for the achievement and maintenance of a world without nuclear weapons conducted a dialogue on how to attain and sustain a world free of nuclear weapons. We hope that the Commission will review the conclusions of the report (A/68/514) as input for its deliberations.

The High-level Meeting on Nuclear Disarmament, held last September, showed us that most nations uphold their commitment to nuclear disarmament. During that same session of meetings, the Non-Aligned Movement submitted a draft resolution that set out actions as follow-up to the High-level Meeting, which we hope that will be discussed at this session of the Commission.

Following the terrible scenes of suffering in Syria, that country's accession to the Chemical Weapons Convention was clearly an important step towards the universalization of that instrument. As a member of the Executive Council of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), Mexico supported the historic decision on the prompt destruction of chemical weapons in Syria, for which an unprecedented plan for the unimpeded destruction of its nuclear aresenals, monitored by and under the oversight of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, was established. The Nobel Peace Prize awarded to the OPCW in 2013 is clear proof of the value of the diplomatic path, the international standard on the prohibition of such inhumane arms and the invaluable role of the strict multilateral verification systems.

Mexico welcomes the first anniversary of the adoption of the United Nations Arms Trade Treaty and affirms its commitment to the Treaty's early entry into force and full implementation. The international community now faces the challenge of implementing the system established by the Treaty. Mexico therefore hopes to host the first conference of States parties to the Treaty in order to build a comprehensive regime to counteract the consequences of the illicit trade in conventional weapons in our societies.

At the second Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons, which took place in my country in February, 146 Governments, eight international bodies, the International Committee of the Red Cross and 61 civil society organizations actively participated in the discussion on the effect of nuclear weapons in a format that, unfortunately, cannot be applied to multilateral forums within the disarmament machinery, given, for example, that civil society cannot take part. Various aspects were addressed with regard to the possible devastating humanitarian consequences

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of a nuclear explosion, as well as the high risk of such an explosion occurring.

The working sessions of the Conference demonstrated with scientific data the lethal or harmful effects that the detonation on any nuclear weapon, whether intentional or accidental, would have on areas such as public health, climate change, food security, development, economic growth and population displacement. The Conference also addressed the risks of detonation and the lack of capacity in the humanitarian response that the international community would face if there were such a disaster. A great majority of participants called for substantive progress on nuclear disarmament by establishing new international standards and parameters in order to achieve a nuclear-weapon-free world.

The final document of the Nayarit Conference sets out the debates and a draft road map for participants to make the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons the keystone of disarmament efforts. We have presented that document for the Commission's deliberation and call on everyone to analyse it.

More than four decades since the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) came into being, its objectives have still not been met. While we value greater developments in the peaceful use of nuclear energy and nuclear non-proliferation, nuclear disarmament remains a pending issue for certain State parties to the NPT. Until that goal is achieved, Mexico will continue to condemn the existence, possession, production, development and use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. We have said that the only guarantee against the use of nuclear weapons and the damage that they cause is their total elimination.

In that regard, we welcome initiatives for inclusive participation that allow for progress to be made towards the prohibition and definitive elimination of nuclear weapons through multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations under the principles of verification, irreversibility and transparency. One of the most effective ways that Mexico has identified to develop trust and transparency among countries is cooperation with regional and international bodies through the submission to them of appropriate, clear and transparent information.

A safe world of lasting peace cannot be based on weapons, in particular weapons of mass destruction, or on the threat of the use of force. The existence of 17,000 nuclear weapons absurdly contradicts the objectives that we have set at the United Nations as we consider new development goals. Mexico deeply regrets that the United Nations disarmament machinery continues to not meet its mandate. We have underscored that multilateral forums should foster and not inhibit deliberations and the decision-making process. We hope that the Commission's work at this sesssion will realize the potential of this body and deliver conclusions and recommendations that brinmg us closer to a more peaceful and safer world.

Ms. González Román (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the Disarmament Commission, as well as the others members of the Bureau. Spain expresses its readiness to work closely with you in order to achieve a satisfactory result at this third session of the cycle.

We would also like to express our thanks and appreciation for the work done by the outgoing Chair of the Commisssion, Ambassador Christopher Grima of Malta, and by the representatives of Saudi Arabia and Norway for their leadership of the working groups.

With regard to the first agenda item for this session, "Recommendations for achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons", my delegation would like to underscore that the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, based on its three complementary pillars of non-proliferation, disarmament and the peaceful use of nuclear energy, is the most valuable instrument we have. It is an irreplaceable framework for the maintenance and strengthening of international peace and stability and for overcoming the current challenges in the area of international security, in particular the threat of proliferation. The plan of action adopted at the 2010 Review Conference provides us with an essential road map that focuses on maintaining and strengthening the commitment to disarmament through the assumption by nuclear-weapon States of new disarmament obligations and the adoption of transparency measures in accordance with article 6 of the NPT.

We also believe that convening a conference on the establishment of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East is key to increasing the security and stability of the region in the international context, as nuclear-weapon-free zones have in other

regions. Aware of the complexity of the process, we support the efforts being made to that end.

The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty is of crucial importance to disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation. It is urgent to achieve the ratifications necessary for it to enter into force. Moreover, we also believe that it is urgent to launch negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on a treaty prohibiting the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons.

The effective operation of the multilateral disarmament institutions is a guarantee for collective security. Last year, various initiatives were adopted through General Assembly resolutions on nuclear disarmament, in particular resolution 68/32 on the follow-up to the 2013 High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on Nuclear Disarmament and resolution 68/46 on the establishmen of an open-ended working group. In order to achieve progress in that area, we believe that an inclusive and constructive focus is necessary. It is also essential that we can count on the nuclear-weapon States and move forward through practical and effective measures, while assuming commitments to disarmament and transparency measures.

Like many other countries, Spain is aware that it is also possible to address the disastrous humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons in the context of the NPT, as acknowledged in the Final Document of the 2010 Review Conference. Awareness of such an impact, analysed extensively at the Oslo and Nayarit conferences, requires us to fully implement the NPT plan of action. To that end, in April we are holding an important meeting in New York, namely, the third Preparatory Committee for the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT. It will be a new opportunity for us to make a joint effort and reaffirm the obligations under the Treaty as a cornerstone of the nuclear non-proliferation regime and a fundamental instrument for moving forward on the nuclear disarmament agenda.

With regard to the agenda item of Working Group II, "Practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons", Spain is firmly committed to that goal, which requires an appropriate response at the international and regional levels. The current state of affairs underscores the importance of transparency regimes and confidence-building measures in preventing tension, as well as the adoption of inclusive measures that take into account all political and regional sensibilities as a means of establishing mutual trust.

Some recent developments in the area of conventional weapons are encouraging and will help to strengthen trust. In April 2013, the Arms Trade Treaty, which was adopted by a large majority, established a sound policy framework for regulating international trade in conventional arms. Spain has just ratified the Treaty and hopes that it will enter into force soon. The Security Council also adopted resolution 2117 (2013) on the non-proliferation of small arms and light weapons, which Spain co-sponsored and is a real milestone in the field. We consider the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects to be an essential tool, and we support the implementation of the International Tracing Instrument.

I would also mention that the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and its facilitation of information on small arms and light weapons are key to fostering an atmosphere of trust and security to which greater transparency in military expenditures could also contribute. Finally, I note that, at the last session, the European Union submitted a working paper designed to share ideas and reflections on practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons with other delegations.

We hope that the work of the Disarmament Commission will deliver long-awaited results this year. We are willing to work with other delegations to find the necessary consensus and overcome obstacles that have prevented it from adequately fulfilling its mandate, so that it can not only discuss but also make recommendations on the two items on the Commission's agenda.

Mr. Al-Hakim (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me at the outset, on behalf of the delegation of Iraq, to sincerely congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the Chair of the United Nations Disarmament Commission at its 2014 session and address my congratulations to the members of the Bureau. Wishing you all success in your task, Mr. Chair, my delegation is prepared to cooperate and support you in your mission to achieve significant results. My delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

The delegation of Iraq affirms the important role played by the Disarmament Commission, the sole

specialized deliberative body within the United Nations disarmament machinery. The importance of that role has grown with the increasing complexity of international affairs and as regional problems, threats of terrorism, the dangers of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and the freeze in disarmament activities endanger international peace. We must therefore intensify our efforts if we are to realize our objectives and achieve a world free of nuclear weapons.

Many countries support Iraq in its position that, in order to stop the proliferation of nuclear weapons and achieve nuclear disarmament, all countries must join the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), and submit their nuclear facilities and programmes to the comprehensive safeguards regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) so that the peaceful purposes of such programmes can be verified.

I avail myself of this opportunity to emphasize the inalienable right of all States, especially developing States, to develop, produce and use nuclear technology for peaceful purposes in order achieve economic growth without discrimination or obstacles, provided that all such activities are subject to the supervision of the IAEA and the provisions of the NPT regime. The Government of Iraq is aware that only the total elimination of nuclear weapons can guarantee the international community against the use or threat of use of such weapons, together with negotiations in a multilateral forum dedicated to ensuring international peace and security through common, practical solutions and agreements. Consequently, Iraq has joined all agreements on disarmament, the most recent of which was the CTBT, which we signed on 26 September 2013, the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons. Furthermore, on behalf of my delegation, I welcome the General Assembly's adoption of resolution 68/32, entitled "Follow-up to the 2013 high-level meeting of the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament".

With regard to the fifth item on our agenda, Iraq was honoured to submit, on behalf of the League of Arab States and its members, a working paper entitled "Recommendations for achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons". Iraq believes that the only way to achieve nuclear disarmament is the full and non-selective implementation of the NPT and the realization of its universality. Nuclear disarmament must be at the top of the international community's priorities because the destructive nature presents serious threats to humankind.

At this juncture, like all other members of the international community, Iraq reaffirms its support for urgent and effective measures to bring about the total elimination of weapons of mass destruction, and first and foremost nuclear weapons. We urgently call for negotiations at the Conference on Disarmament to conclude a comprehensive agreement on nuclear weapons that would provide for restrictions on the acquisition, development, production, testing, stockpiling, transportation, use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, as well as their destruction. We must also agree on an internationally binding instrument to give unconditional negative security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States that they will never be subject to the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons by nuclear-weapon States. But that should not be treated as an alternative to our main objective — the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

Iraq is aware of the importance of the Conference on Disarmament as a multilateral forum for disarmament negotiations. At the same time, we express our concern about the present state of the Conference, which has been unable in recent years to fulfil its role in reaching an agreement on its programme of work, its mandate notwithstanding. It is therefore incumbent on us to intensify our efforts to agree on a comprehensive and balanced programme of work with the consensus of all Member States. Iraq was honoured to chair the Conference on Disarmament from 24 June to 18 August 2013. During that session, the Conference endorsed the draft decision on establishing an informal working group with a mandate to produce a programme of work robust in substance and progressive over time in implementation (document CD/1956/Rev.1).

Iraq would like once again to express its support for the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones as an important step towards the elimination of nuclear weapons, for building confidence at the regional level and as a potential tool for strengthening the NPT regime. We emphasize the importance of establishing a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. Any effort to establish such a zone must be prepared for with basic steps, including by requiring Israel to begin a process of nuclear disarmament and to abide by the NPT, as well

as to subject its nuclear facilities to the comprehensive safeguards regime of the IAEA.

While Iraq is disappointed with the slow pace of international efforts to convene a conference on the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and all weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, we emphasize the importance of adhering to the mandate of the facilitator and of the countries organizing the postponed conference with the support of the United Nations, as expressed in the Final Document of the 2010 NPT Review Conference. We also call on the United Nations and the Secretary-General to play a more effective role in urging the States parties of the region and the organizing countries to make the conference happen.

Regarding confidence-building measures in the area of conventional weapons, my delegation emphasizes the importance of taking practical and effective steps and of pursuing a comprehensive approach to the practicalities of disarmament. Excessive stockpiling of such weapons damages national, regional and international security as well as socioeconomic and human development efforts. In that regard, Iraq welcomes the adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty as an additional step in the process of strengthening international peace and security at regional and international levels.

My delegation would like to emphasize the guiding principles outlined by the Disarmament Commission in its report contained in document A/54/42, which discusses limits on conventional weapons in the light of the importance of reducing excessive stocks of such weapons while taking into consideration the legitimate right of Member States to use them for self-defence. My Government considers regulating conventional weapons and establishing confidence-building measures very important, and has thus set up a national commission on conventional weapons and designated a focal point on small arms and light weapons.

The scope of Iraq's efforts to strengthen the universality of the relevant agreements and conventions on conventional weapons was demonstrated in its adherence on 13 May 2013 to the the Convention on Cluster Munitions, which took effect in Iraq in November 2013. On 19 December 2013, the Iraqi Parliament endorsed the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects, and the Government is now taking the necessary constitutional and legislative measures to complete the process of adhering to it. In its efforts to get rid of the land mines, cluster munitions and explosives left over from the wars the country has suffered, our Government has implemented a comprehensive programme of action, in coordination with the United Nations Development Programme, aimed at ridding itself of those weapons, informing its people about the threats they pose to security and communities, assisting their victims and reintegrating them into society.

Finally, I would like to reiterate Iraq's readiness to make every effort in cooperating with the Commission in order to enable it to adopt recommendations that respond to Member States' concerns.

Mr. León González (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation congratulates you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the Disarmament Commission for this year's substantive session. We also congratulate the members of the Bureau and wish them every success in discharging their duties, and we assure them of the cooperation of the Cuban delegation.

Cuba fully supports the statements made earlier by the representatives of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and of Costa Rica on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC).

My delegation reaffirms the importance of the Disarmament Commission as a specialized body within the multilateral disarmament machinery of the United Nations that enables us to hold in-depth discussions of specific disarmament issues aimed at producing concrete recommendations in the area. As we all know, we are now in the final year of the current cycle of discussions and we hope this will bring substantive progress resulting in specific recommendations on the two topics under consideration, with a view to submitting them to the General Assembly.

Cuba belongs to a region whose leaders recently gathered in Havana for CELAC's Second Summit, which decided to formally proclaim Latin America and the Caribbean a zone of peace — a historic landmark proclamation that fills us with a healthy sense of pride. At the CELAC Summit, the States of the region reaffirmed their commitment to making a priority of promoting nuclear disarmament. We note that our region was a pioneer in establishing itself as a nuclear-weapon-free zone, and we believe that the

total elimination and prohibition of nuclear weapons is the only sustainable way to ensure international peace and security and the survival of the human race on our planet.

Nothing justifies the existence of more than 17,265 nuclear weapons. Allowing for the possibility of their use is at the very least an irresponsible attitude. We now know for sure that a nuclear mushroom cloud today would result in a genocide far greater than that which was responsible for the sorrow and suffering of thousands of Japanese families. The existence of broad international support for nuclear disarmament was noted on 26 September at the first-ever High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on Nuclear Disarmament, promoted by the Non-Aligned Movement. As we all know, on 5 December the General Assembly decided to request that negotiations aimed at agreement on a comprehensive convention on the total prohibition and destruction of nuclear weapons start as soon as possible.

Likewise, the Assembly decided to declare 26 September the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons. The Cuban delegation invites Member States, the United Nations system and non-governmental organizations, academic institutions, parliamentarians, media organizations and private individuals to commemorate the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, the goal of which is to mobilize international efforts to achieve the common objective of a world free of nuclear weapons.

In support of the priority objective of achieving nuclear disarmament, we draw attention to the working papers of the session under the topic, "Recommendations for achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons", which we hope will receive the immediate backing of all delegations. Quick progress is urgently needed to ensure the full implementation by nuclear weapon States of their commitment to attain the priority goal of nuclear disarmament and the elimination and prohibition of nuclear weapons through irreversible, transparent and verifiable initiatives.

Cuba expresses its opposition to the refining and modernization of existing nuclear weapons and the development of new nuclear weapons, which are inconsistent with the obligations of nuclear disarmament. We also oppose all nuclear testing, including the use of super-computers and other sophisticated non-explosive methods. Our country reiterates the need to eliminate the role of nuclear weapons in military doctrines and security policies. Cuba demands an end to political manipulation with respect to non-proliferation based on double standards and the existance of an elite club that continues to refine its nuclear weapons while calling into question the inalienable right of the peoples of the countries of the South to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

Our country demands that the nuclear-weapon States fulfil the commitments taken under article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), immediately implement the 13 practical measures agreed at the 2000 NPT Review Conference, aimed at achieving nuclear disarmament, and implement the plan of action adopted at the 2010 Review Conference. We reaffirm the inalienable right of States to the development, research, production and peaceful use of nuclear energy without discrimination and in conformity with articles I, II , III and IV of the NPT. We also reaffirm the commitment of all signatory parties to the Treaty to facilitate the exchange of equipment, materials and scientific and technological information regarding peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

My country is concerned about the failure to implement the agreement on the convening of an international conference on the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. We reiterate that the holding of such a conference is an important and essential part of the outcome of the 2010 NPT Review Conference. In addition to making an important contribution to achieving the goal of nuclear disarmament, the establishment of such a zone would represent an essential step forward in the peace process in the Middle East. Cuba urges the parties to convene the conference without delay, in accordance with the commitments made by States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons in 1995, 2000 and 2010.

With respect to practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms, Cuba considers those voluntary measures to be a good way to strengthen international peace and security and that they should be adopted in strict compliance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and respect for the particular security concerns of States. Cuba recognizes the contribution of confidence-building measures to disarmament and

arms control, while reiterating that they are not an alternative to disarmament.

It would represent a failure of the Commission and a lack of commitment to disarmament if the countries represented here did not manifest sufficient political will to achieve concrete results on the two substantive issues before the Commission. We believe it is up to us to change things and to start moving forward. On behalf of the Cuban delegation, I reiterate our readiness to promote success in our work. It is our hope that the Disarmament Commission will be able to recommend concrete proposals to the General Assembly by the end of the cycle.

Mr. Khalil (Egypt): I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to preside over this year's substantive session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC). I would like also to commend your predecessor, Mr. Christopher Grima of Malta, for chairing the past session of the Commission. Likewise, I extend our congratulations to the other members of the Bureau on their election and to the representatives of Saudi Arabia and Norway on chairing the Working Groups. Let me assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation.

At the outset, I associate Egypt's position with the positions reflected in the statements delivered by the representatives of Indonesia, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, and Nigeria, on behalf of the African Group (see A/CN.10/PV.337), and that to be delivered by the representative of Oman on behalf of the Arab Group.

This year is particularly important for the UNDC, as it brings to closure the current cycle. A successful outcome would require consensus on the issues discussed by the two Working Groups, namely, "Recommendations for achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons" and "Practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons". A consensus substantive outcome will be most important this year if we are to preserve the relevance of the UNDC to the multilateral machinery on disarmament, especially given the successive failures of the past cycles of the UNDC to adopt an outcome since 1999. We call upon nuclear-weapon States and major arms exporters to display the necessary political will to facilitate reaching a substantive outcome on the two important issues before the Commission's agenda in order to activate the potential of the UNDC in furthering the cause of disarmament.

I will begin with the topic of the first Working Group, "Recommendations for achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons". The starting point in that regard should be the implementation of General Assembly resolution 68/32, "Follow-up to the 2013 high-level meeting of the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament", held on 26 September 2013. The resolution charts a road map towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons. The UNDC should be ready to play its part in deliberating on the implementation of the road map, especially with regard to the elements of a comprehensive convention on nuclear weapons to prohibit their possession, development, production, acquisition, testing, stockpiling, transfer, use or threat of use and to provide for their destruction.

Egypt welcomes the renewed momentum towards reviving the international debate on the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons and the incompatibility of their use with international humanitarian law. We support the call of the second Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons for the development of a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons. We urge nuclear-weapon States, especially those that did not participate in the first and second Conferences, in Norway and Mexico, to actively take part in the third Conference, to be held in Austria. As owners of nuclear weapons, they bear a special responsibility in avoiding any possibility of what would be a catastrophe.

The universalization of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is an indispensable step to achieve comprehensive and complete nuclear disarmament.

The speedy establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones adds impetus to efforts aimed at achieving the wider objective of a world free of nuclear weapons. The international community has recognized the urgency of the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. Yet, despite those repeated calls and the overwhelming global support for the establishment of the zone, the conference for the establishment of the zone was not convened in 2012 as mandated by the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

The continued failure to convene the Conference puts into question the credibility and relevance of the NPT review process, if not the Treaty itself. The current session of the Disarmament Commission provides a timely opportunity to reiterate the commitment of the international community to bringing the process back on track. It provides an adequate forum to reflect on how to break the current stalemate.

Egypt has spared no effort in playing its part to advance the process of establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. I refer here in particular to the initiative launched by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Egypt before the General Assembly on 28 September 2013 (see A/68/PV.18). That initiative has garnered letters of support from the States of the region that are members of the Non-Aligned Movement. Those letters were compiled in a note by the Secretary-General (A/68/781). We call on the permanent members of the Security Council and the remaining State in the region that is not party to the NPT to follow suit in endorsing the initiative by sending letters to the Secretary-General confirming their commitment to the establishment of the zone, as called for by the initiative.

Egypt is fully committed to international efforts aimed at preventing non-State actors from gaining access to nuclear weapons and related material and technology. Three nuclear security summits addressed measures aimed at securing the physical protection of nuclear materials and facilities. Egypt is of the view that the International Atomic Energy Agency is the main multilateral forum for discussing matters related to nuclear security and establishing standards and regulations in that field. Concerns about nuclear security should not be invoked to preclude the legitimate right of States to the development, research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes in conformity with article IV of the NPT.

The deliberations of the second Working Group of the Disarmament Commission on practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons assume increasing importance in the light of the upcoming convening of the Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. By contributing to the debate on confidence-building measures, the Disarmament Commission will be helping to address areas of concern related to conventional weapons, including the salient issue of small arms and light weapons.

We have consistently called for the following elements as integral components of any possible confidence-building measures: subjecting the over-production and ever-increasing stockpiles of conventional weapons in the hands of major arms exporters and producers to international scrutiny; ensuring mutual international accountability as the only guarantee against the potential abuse of the existing imbalance between major arms producers and the rest of the world; and addressing protracted threats to international peace and security. In that regard, there is no more profound threat to peace and stability, international law, international humanitarian law, human rights law and the core principles of the Charter of the United Nations itself than crimes of aggression and foreign occupation that employ weapons arsenals to threaten and dominate peoples and deny them their most basic human rights. By developing such confidence-building measures, the Disarmament Commission will be refining the traditional meaning of the term, thereby contributing at the conceptual level to enhancing international peace, security and stability.

Egypt stands ready to contribute constructively to the deliberations to ensure a balanced outcome between the results of the two Working Groups that reflects a balance between the interests of all States. We are confident in your ability, Sir, to steer the discussions towards a successful outcome to this cycle.

Mr. Bishnoi (India): India would like to join other delegations in congratulating you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC) for this session. We would also like to congratulate the other members of the Bureau on their election. You can be assured of the full support of my delegation in the discharge of your responsibilities.

I would also like to say, at the outset, that India associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (see A/CN.10/PV.337).

India attaches high importance to the Disarmament Commission as the specialized deliberative pillar of the triad of disarmament machinery entities put in place by the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. As the only body for in-depth deliberations on relevant disarmament issues with

universal membership, the Commission plays a unique role.

We share the disappointment over the Disarmament Commission's inability to adopt substantive recommendations for over a decade. However, we continue to believe in the inherent value of this forum. It is important to recall that the Commission has had several successes in the past, when it was able to adopt principles, guidelines and recommendations on specific disarmament issues. It is up to us, the Member States, to translate the potential the value of the Disarmament Commission into reality by giving importance to its work and showing greater political commitment on disarmament issues.

At this stage, we would like to share some thoughts on the two issues on our agenda. We will further elaborate on our positions in the meetings of the two Working Groups in the coming weeks.

We attach importance to the agenda item "Recommendations fo achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons". The complete elimination of nuclear weapons is a long-cherished goal of the international community. The General Assembly, in its very first resolution (resolution 1 (I)), adopted unanimously in 1946, sought the elimination from national armaments of atomic weapons and all other major weapons adaptable to mass destruction. The Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (resolution S-10/2), adopted by consensus by the international community, also accorded the highest priority to nuclear disarmament.

India attaches the highest priority to global, non-discriminatory and verifiable nuclear disarmament, a principle that has strong and consistent domestic support in our country. India is convinced that the goal of nuclear disarmament can be achieved through a step-by-step process underwritten by a universal commitment and an agreed multilateral framework that is global and non-discriminatory. There is a need for a meaningful dialogue among all States possessing nuclear weapons in order to build trust and confidence and to reduce the salience of nuclear weapons in international affairs and security doctrines.

The Prime Minister of India, when inaugurating a conference entitled "A Nuclear-Weapons-Free World: From Conception to Reality" in New Delhi on 2 April, stressed the need to bring Cold War thinking to an end, and said,

> "What is needed today is an agreed multilateral framework that can involve all States possessing nuclear weapons. What is needed is to focus on practical measures that reduce nuclear dangers by reducing the salience of nuclear weapons in security doctrines."

In the current international climate, there is great support for progressive steps towards the delegitimization of nuclear weapons. Measures to reduce nuclear danger arising from accidental or unauthorized use of nuclear weapons are pertinent in that regard. India's draft resolutions in the First Committee express some of those ideas and have found support from a large number of States. Our working paper, which was developed in the spirit of the 1988 Rajiv Gandhi action plan and submitted to the United Nations Disarmament Commission in April 2007, also suggested specific measures, including a global no-first-use agreement and a convention on the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons.

We believe that the UNDC must send a strong signal of the international community's resolve to achieve the goal of global, non-discriminatory and verifiable nuclear disarmament. Member States should use this forum to intensify dialogue in that regard. We can demonstrate our commitment by adopting consensus recommendations on the objective of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.

With regard to the second issue for discussion, "Practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventiona' weapons", India supports practical confidence-building measures initiatives (CBMs), whether unilateral, bilateral, regional or global. We believe that CBMs can build trust and confidence and enhance transparency to minimize misunderstandings and misperceptions, thereby promoting an environment conducive to peace and security among States. India has initiated several CBMs with the countries in our neighbourhood.

We believe that the initiation of a confidence-building process must be freely decided upon by States and in the exercise of their sovereignty. Confidence-building must be a step-by-step process and should evolve at a pace comfortable to all participating States. CBMs in specific regions should fully take into account the political, military and other conditions prevailing in the

region. CBMs in a regional context should be adopted upon the initiative and with the agreement of the States of the region concerned. In elaborating practical CBMs in the area of conventional weapons, we should take advantage of the guidelines on CBMs endorsed by the General Assembly at its forty-first session on the recommendation of the UNDC.

We believe that a significant amount of work needs to be accomplished on that agenda item in our meetings this year. We also believe that discussions on CBMs in the field of conventional weapons should not become a tool for promoting instruments that do not enjoy universal support.

As the final year of this cycle of UNDC meetings, it will be crucial for us to be able to adopt substantive recommendations this year. We hope to have in-depth exchanges of views on all aspects related to the agenda items and are hopeful that good progress will be made in our work.

Mr. Dabbashi (Libya) (*spoke in Arabic*): I am very pleased to see you, Sir, chairing our meeting. I heartily congratulate you on your assumption of the chairmanship of the United Nations Disarmament Commission for 2014. I would also like to congratulate the other members of the Bureau. I take this opportunity to express my full appreciation to Mr. Christopher Grima, Permanent Representative of Malta, for his excellent stewardship of the Commission last year.

At the outset, I associate myself with the statements made by the representatives of Nigeria, on behalf of the Group of African States, and of Indonesia, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (see A/CN.10/PV.337), as well as with the statement to be delivered by the representative of the Sultanate of Oman on behalf of the Group of Arab States.

In reaffirming the importance of the United Nations Disarmament Commission as the sole specialized deliberative body within the United Nations disarmament machinery, Libya deplores the Commission's decade-long inability to achieve consensus. The Commission has limited itself to adopting guiding principles on nuclear-weapon-free zones and conventional weapons. Libya believes that the political will of States should enable the Commission to shurg off its current inertia. Accordingly, we hope to reach agreement in our work at this session and adopt some practical measures. I would also like to reaffirm the absolute need to raise the Conference on Disarmament from its current impasse, which is the result of a lack of political will of certain parties. We reaffirm the need for urgent measures to be taken to allow the Conference to play its full role in negotiations on nuclear disarmament.

At this session, the Commission is addressing two issues, "Recommendations for achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons" and "Practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons". On the first, despite the efforts and progress made in the field of disarmament in the past decade, the risk of the use of nuclear weapons is still real. There is no doubt at this point that the complete elimination of nuclear weapons is the only guarantee that they will not be used and that there will be no threat of their use. As a result, we reaffirm the importance for nuclear-weapon States to renounce their nuclear weapons programmes, as Libya, South Africa, Kazakhstan, Ukraine and Belarus have done on their own initiative.

We also call for the universalization of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as soon as possible in order to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons. We reaffirm the need for nuclear-weapon States to live up to their international commitments under article VI of the NPT. We call on them to implement the outcome of the 1995 NPT Review Conference, the 13 practical steps adopted at the 2000 NPT Review Conference, and the action plan contained in the Final Document of the 2010 NPT Review Conference.

Libya affirms the importance of the first High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on Nuclear Disarmament (see A/68/PV.11). We welcome the adoption of resolution 68/32 as the outcome of the meeting. We also reiterate our full support for international plans to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone throughout the world as a step towards eliminating the horror of such weapons. In order to achieve that objective, we urge all parties that were to convene the 2012 conference on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, which still has not been held, to spare no effort and to increase cooperation in order to implement in 2015 such a decision pursuant to the final document of the 2010 NPT Review Conference. We call on the parties concerned to strive to hold the conference before the end of the year and to convince all stakeholders in the region to fully participate in order to ensure its success and to achieve its objectives.

In that context, we welcome Egypt's initiative, put forward on 28 September 2013 at the current session of the General Assembly (see A/68/PV.18), which includes tangible measures to support regional and international efforts to establish a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. In that regard, we draw attention to the letter addressed to the Secretary-General from the States members of the League of Arab States, including Libya and Iran, as contained in document A/68/781, in which those States reiterate their support for that region becoming a nuclear-weapon-free zone.

With regard to practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons, I would like to reiterate our support for the practical initiatives in that area. We are convinced that they will increase transparency and will establish an environment conducive to moving forward in the area of disarmament. Such tools therefore serve to strengthen the maintenance of international peace and security. We would like to reiterate that we are satisfied with the General Assembly's adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty on 2 April 2013.

The Commission of course knows that Libya suffers greatly from land mines and unexploded remnants of war dating back to the Second World War, as well as land mines planted by the former dictator Al-Qadhafi. During the fighting, the regime placed tens of thousands of land mines. The United Nations and many non-governmental organizations are now helping the Libyan authorities in their attempts to remove the remaining mines and weapons stockpiles. Assistance is also being provided to those who have suffered as a result of such weapons in order to reintegrate them into society.

Libya reiterates its full support for the Conference on Disarmament and international and multilateral cooperation and policies to move our agenda forward and to effectively achieve the disarmament goals. We have confidence in your experience, Sir, and note that it will enable us to achieve tangible results in that area. We affirm our cooperation in ensuring the success of this session.

Ms. Telford (United Kingdom): At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the chairmanship and assure you of the full support of the United Kingdom delegation.

The United Kingdom remains absolutely committed to the long-term goal of achieving a world without nuclear weapons. The United Kingdom recognizes that, along with the other nuclear-weapon States, we have particular responsibilities, which we take seriously. The United Kingdom has already unilaterally disarmed further than any other nuclear-weapon State, to a minimal credible deterrent.

We have a strong record of fulfilling our nuclear disarmament commitments and of meeting the international legal obligations as a member of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). We also have a strong record of transparency on the capabilities that we possess and the limited part that such capability plays in our defence doctrine. In our 2010 Strategic Defence and Security Review we openly reported on our ongoing disarmament measures.

Unilateral action is only one part of the process towards a world without nuclear weapons. All of us here today need to focus on our shared commitment to building an international environment in which no State feels the need to possess nuclear weapons and where States with nuclear weapons can disarm in a balanced and verifiable manner. Building the right international environment involves many steps, not least including the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. We urge all States that have not done so to sign the Treaty and to ratify it as soon as possible, in particular those States whose signature is required for it to enter into force. We congratulate Guinea-Bissau, Iraq and Niue on their ratification during the past year.

Starting negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT) is another essential step that the United Kingdom fully supports. We hope that the meeting of the FMCT Group of Government Experts this month can take positive steps towards that aim by making recommendations on possible aspects that could contribute to a treaty. The P-5 process is also key to finding a realistic and sustainable way forward on our commitments towards multilateral disarmament. We instigated that process in 2009 to build trust and confidence among the nuclear-weapon States and to encourage transparency. Also this month, the P-5 will hold their fifth conference in Beijing.

The NPT action plan agreed in 2010, which covers all three pillars of the NPT, was a major achievement. As we move towards the NPT Review Conference

in 2015, we call on all States parties to demonstrate their commitment to implementing the action plan. We will report United Kingdom progress against the 2010 action plan at the NPT Preparatory Committee at the end of this month. The United Kingdom looks forward to hearing from other States on their progress, in accordance with action point 20.

The United Kingdom will also take the opportunity to report further at the NPT Preparatory Committee on our work with Norway on the verification of warhead dismantlement. That is a unique initiative by a nuclear-weapon State to carry out such work with a non-nuclear-weapon State. We believe that the lessons learned in that initiative will add a significant policy and technical contribution to nuclear disarmament, investigating and developing prototype, technology and procedures that could be used in a future verification regime.

The United Kingdom believes that nuclear-weapon-free zones contribute greatly to strengthening the nuclear non-proliferation regime and to enhancing regional and international security. We remain committed to signing the protocols to the Central Asian and South-East Asian nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties as soon as possible.

The United Kingdom also remains committed to the objective of achieving a Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction. We regret that a conference was not convened in 2012 as planned. However, we are encouraged by the informal consultations that have taken place over the past six months, and we look forward to convening the conference as soon as the States in the region can agree on arrangements.

Agreeing on the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) last year represented a significant outcome for the international community at the end of what was a long and challenging process. The Treaty introduces robust, effective and legally binding controls on the international trade in weapons. The United Kingdom ratified the Treaty, along with 17 other States, on 2 April and will provisionally implement articles 6 and 7, pending the Treaty's entry into force. We welcome all those countries that have ratified, and encourage those that have not ratified to do so as soon as they are able. The United Kingdom will work, including alongside the European Union, to support other Member States in ratifying and implementing the ATT. We hope and expect to pass the 50 ratifications necessary for its entry into force this year.

In the hands of criminal gangs, terrorists or armed groups, small arms and light weapons kill about 1,000 people each day and injure hundreds of thousands more each year. Small arms and light weapons undermine peace, reconstruction, security, stability and human rights. The violence caused by them destroys livelihoods, displaces entire communities and hampers social and economic development. The international community has a responsibility to combat and eradicate the illegal manufacturing and trafficking of those weapons.

The United Kingdom has contributed to international efforts by promoting the transparency of trade through information returns, actively helping regional and global organizations to highlight and tackle the illicit trade and funding non-governmental organizations' work to assist vulnerable countries to carry out their work on the issue of small arms and light weapons.

Finally, the United Kingdom remains resolute in its pledge to put to an end for all time to the suffering and casualties caused by cluster munitions. The United Kingdom withdrew all cluster munitions from operational service in 2008. By December 2011, two-thirds of these munitions had been destroyed, and in November we destroyed all our remaining stockpiles five years ahead of the deadline set out in the Convention on Cluster Munitions. This bears witness to the strength of our commitment. We encourage all States that have not yet done so to join us in outlawing the use of cluster munitions.

I will conclude by reiterating that the United Kingdom is committed to the entire United Nations disarmament machinery, as established under tenth special session of the General Assembly, including the United Nations Disarmament Commission. We recognize that over the past few years, the Commission has not been working as it should be, and we support any discussion among Member States designed at identifying practical ways of improving its methods of work.

Mr. Toro-Carnevali (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela associates itself with the statements made by the representatives of Indonesia, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, and of Costa Rica, on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (see A/CN.10/PV.337).

On behalf of my delegation, Sir, allow me to congratulate you on your election to the chairmanship of the United Nations Disarmament Commission at this substantive session. We extend our congratulations to the members of the Bureau. We also wish to thank Ambassador Christopher Grima of Malta for his tireless efforts as Chair of the Disarmament Commission last year.

My country reiterates its full commitment to multilateral diplomacy in the areas of disarmament and non-proliferation. In that regard, we stress the importance of the Disarmament Commission, with its universal membership, as the sole specialized, deliberative body within the United Nations multilateral disarmament machinery, charged with considering specific disarmament issues and with formulating recommendations to the General Assembly. In that regard, allow me to reiterate my country's willingness to work constructively with all other Member States under your leadership, Sir, in our efforts to fulfil the complex tasks entrusted to the Commission.

We join those speakers who have previously emphasized the humanitarian, socioeconomic, security, environmental and moral reasons that require us to move towards a world free of nuclear weapons. In that context, my delegation takes this opportunity to recall the importance of the first High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on Nuclear Disarmament (see A/68/PV.11) on 26 September 2013. We wish to highlight in particular the high level of participation and the broad support shown by the participants in favour of the complete and total elimination of nuclear weapons. The Meeting served to reaffirm that nuclear disarmament remains the highest priority of the international community.

We also welcome the adoption of resolution 68/32, "Follow-up to the 2013 the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament", including the call to start negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on a convention on the prohibition of the possession, development, production, acquisition, testing, stockpiling, transfer, use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. We call on Member States represented here to start work without further delay on the guidelines for such an important and essential convention. My delegation also reaffirms, in the context of the adoption of resolution 68/32, its full commitment to the decision to convene no later than 2018 a high-level United Nations conference on nuclear disarmament.

The delegation of Venezuela wishes to recall, as have other countries of the region, the historic decision of the Heads of State and of Government of Latin America and the Caribbean, meeting in Havana at the second Summit of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States on January, to declare Latin America and the Caribbean a zone of peace and to reaffirm the ongoing commitment of the region to the peaceful settlement of disputes.

As members of the first densely populated area in the world to be declared a nuclear-weapon-free zone, through the Treaty of Tlatelolco, we stress that the establishment of internationally recognized nuclear-weapon-free zones constitutes an essential contribution to achieving nuclear disarmament. In that regard, my country deeply regrets the failure to agree on the holding of an international conference on the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, and urges the organizers to convene the conference on an urgent basis in accordance with what was agreed by the States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons in 1995, 2000 and 2010.

My delegation believes that practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons play an important role in the promotion of understanding, transparency and cooperation among States and in increasing stability and security, always in strict compliance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, respecting their voluntary nature and the specific situations and concerns of States on security issues. My country notes that it has been working with the other nations of the Union of South American Nations to promote a series of confidence- and security-building measures, including on information exchanges on defence spending and military activities, and measures promoting guarantees, compliance and verification. It is a process that is promising for regional and international peace and security.

My delegation associates itself with all Member States that have highlighted the need to redouble our commitments and political will to multilateral disarmament machinery.

In conclusion, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela reiterates its full support for the Disarmament Commission and calls for intensified efforts to achieve a significant result that allows us to make progress on

both horizontal and vertical nuclear disarmament and non- proliferation.

Mr. Bertoux (France) (*spoke in French*): France aligns itself with the statement to be made by the representative of Greece on behalf of the European Union. I would also like to congratulate you, Sir, on your appointment as Chair of the Disarmament Commission at this session.

I would like to clarify a few points concerning the French position.

We hope that the third session of the Disarmament Commission for this cycle will be in line with the positive momentum of the past few years, which has included the entry into force of the New START treaty, the progress made on the agenda of the Nuclear Security Summits, the signing of the Arms Trade Treaty, and the adoption of the joint action plan by the E3+3 Governments and Iran. This shows that when a constructive and pragmatic spirit reigns, we can make concrete progress on the disarmament and non-proliferation agenda. It also shows that the search for a safer world must be addressed in a comprehensive manner and efforts should be made in all areas, including on nuclear, chemical, biological, conventional weapon, ballistic missile and space issues.

In the year since the most recent session of the Disarmament Commission, there have been undeniable successes but also unacceptable developments. Let us start with the successes.

First, the adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty in April 2013 was a historic development in international law. It is the first major treaty adopted within the United Nations in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation since 1996. The Treaty establishes universal norms to regulate the arms trade and prevent illegal trafficking. Those norms will strengthen peace and international security. The Treaty also places international humanitarian law and international human rights law at the heart of criteria that States parties undertake to respect. The Treaty is the best evidence of the effective multilateralism that France fervently hopes for. France proudly deposited its instrument of ratification to the Treaty last week, together with 17 other Member States, bringing the total number of ratifications to 31. The entry into force of the Treaty is now within reach, and we can realistically expect it to occur this year.

We should also note the success of the third Nuclear Security Summit in The Hague on 24 and 25 March, where 35 heads of State signed the Summit's joint communiqué, pledging to strengthen the security of civilian facilities and the storage and transport of fissile materials to prevent terrorist risks.

However, we must not deceive ourselves. There have also been unacceptable and worrying developments this year.

While the third Special Session of the Conference of the States Parties to Review the Operation of the Chemical Weapons Convention was concluded successfully in April 2013, we learned with horror of the Syrian Government's repeated use of chemical weapons against its own people, culminating in the Al-Ghouta chemical attack of 21 August 2013. The strong response of the international community, in particular France, led to the adoption of Security Council resolution 2118 (2013), forcing Syria to dismantle its chemical weapons under the supervision of the joint mission by the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and the United Nations. The mission is making progress, but we remain vigilant and will ensure that the decommissioning is complete and verified over time.

In the nuclear field, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is the cornerstone of nuclear non-proliferation and the foundation of our disarmament efforts. The action plan adopted at the most recent Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT, in 2010, is thus our road map. The full implementation of that comprehensive and balanced plan is the responsibility of all States parties, particularly in the lead-up to the 2015 Review Conference.

Nuclear-weapon States, as defined by the NPT, must of course live up to their commitments, and France is aware of its responsibilities as such a State. France's record in terms of nuclear disarmament is exemplary. The irreversible dismantling of our nuclear test site and of our facilities producing fissile material for weapons purposes, the dismantling of the land-based component of our deterrent capacity and the reduction by a third of our oceanic and airborne components are examples that demonstrate our concrete commitment. Our record shows actions, not simply words. The convening of the third follow-up meeting of the permanent five, which will be held in coming days in China, reflects the

seriousness of nuclear-weapon States in implementing the action plan and in terms of their commitments under the NPT.

But we must also strengthen the other aspects of the multilateral framework by bringing all States that have not yet done so, including those listed in annex 2 of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, to sign on to the Treaty. In that regard, we welcome the recent ratification of the Treaty by three States since the Commission's most recent session.

We also need to negotiate a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons in the Conference on Disarmament. That should be our priority. We hope the Group of Governmental Experts, which has just held its first meeting in Geneva, will then facilitate a rapid launch of negotiations within the Conference on Disarmament on this subject, including stakeholders concerned. Moreover, we take this opportunity to call on all States concerned to establish as soon as possible a moratorium on the production of fissile materials, just as France, the United States, the United Kingdom and Russia have already done.

However, all States must contribute to disarmament by creating the necessary security environment. That will require resolving the two major proliferation crises that now threaten international peace and security. North Korea, to start with, has continued its provocations during 2013 and early this year. Besides its third nuclear test in February 2013, Pyongyang has continued its uranium enrichment activities and relaunched the plutonium reactor at the Yongbyon site. In recent weeks, North Korea has launched several ballistic missiles, including two of medium range. We urge North Korea to comply with its international obligations and to put an end to its bellicose rhetoric.

Discussions on the Iranian nuclear programme have seen encouraging developments in the past year. The adoption of the joint action plan on 24 November 2013, implemented since January, is indeed a step forward for peace and security. For the first time, the E3+3 obtained from Iran a six-month suspension of its most sensitive nuclear programme activities and thereby gained time for negotiations. Dialogue has only started. The joint action plan is only an interim agreement. The Security Council's mandate to the group of six is to find a long-term solution to the Iranian nuclear programme and ensure confidence in its exclusively peaceful purpose. That constitutes the meaning and purpose of the talks between Iran and the group of six that are taking place today and tomorrow in Vienna. We approach these talks with an open mind, as well as open eyes.

Finally, France supports efforts to implement the 1995 resolution on the Middle East. We regret that it was not possible to hold a conference on establishing a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East in 2013. We reaffirm our support for the efforts of the facilitator, Mr. Laajava, to ensure that the conference will be held as soon as possible with all the stakeholders concerned. We call on all countries of the region to work constructively in that direction.

France hopes that this session of the Commission will result in a consensus outcome. You can count, Mr. Chair, on my delegation's sincere support in achieving that goal.

Mr. Hossain (Bangladesh): Let me congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC) at its 2014 substantive session. My delegation sincerely hopes that your able leadership will guide the session towards a productive outcome on both items on this year's UNDC agenda and thereby end the 15-year drought in the Commission.

Bangladesh aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/CN.10/PV.337). However, I will make some points in my national capacity.

The UNDC has already concluded the second year of its three-year cycle. We can hardly afford to waste the final, third year. In fact, we have almost forgotten when the deliberations in the UNDC, the sole deliberative organ of the General Assembly on disarmament, last produced concrete recommendations. Before the UNDC slides into irrelevance, we, the Member States, need to inject a combination of political will and workable working methods into the work of the UNDC, thereby enabling this forum to live up to its mandate.

I will make a few points highlighting our position on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, the first item on this year's agenda. First, we believe that the sustenance and proliferation of nuclear arsenals impede the realization of the purposes and are incompatible with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations. We believe that nuclear weapons are a threat to

humankind. Nuclear and non-nuclear States alike know that fact. We therefore urge all States to work towards the elimination of the threat in good faith — nuclear-weapon States pursing complete, irreversible, verifiable and transparent nuclear disarmament, and non-nuclear-weapon States refraining from seeking nuclear arsenals.

Secondly, we hold that seeking the goals of both disarmament and non-proliferation with an equal sense of importance and urgency is needed to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons. In that regard, we reiterate the urgent need to commence negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament for the early conclusion of a comprehensive convention on nuclear weapons, as provided in resolution 68/32, entitled "Follow-up to the 2013 high-level meeting of the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament".

Thirdly, pending the total elimination of nuclear weapons from the world, non-nuclear-weapon States deserve legally binding protection from the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons against them.

Fourthly, the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in accordance with the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (resolution S-10/2) and the 1999 UNDC principles represent useful interim steps towards securing negative security assurances and achieving global nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation objectives.

Fifthly, we would like to emphasize the inalienable right of all parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) to develop, research, produce and use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes without discrimination, in conformity with articles 1 and 2 of the Treaty and in strict compliance with International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards and guidelines.

Sixthly, we consider the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), which my Government has signed and ratified, to be a critical instrument and an essential step to ensure nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. We call upon the eight specific nuclear technology holder countries whose lack of signature and ratification is holding back the CTBT's entry into force to sign and ratify the Treaty urgently and unconditionally.

In spite of living in the shadow of three nuclear Powers, Bangladesh has unconditionally opted to remain non-nuclear and shown unequivocal commitment to full compliance with the NPT and the CTBT. We have an impeccable disarmament record. Bangladesh is a party to all disarmament-related treaties including the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and the Biological Weapons Convention. In the field of conventional weapons, we are also fully committed to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, the United Nations instrument for standardized international reporting of military expenditures and the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. Equally significantly, we are among the very few Asian countries and the first South Asian country to have signed the Arms Trade Treaty, whose ratification is now being considered in our capital.

It is quite clear to everyone in the Assembly that the UNDC has not been fulfilling its role. We need to display flexibility in our national position and invest the political capital necessary to ensure that this deliberative disarmament machinery will fulfil its mandate.

Mr. Midttun (Norway): Let me first echo other speakers in congratulating you, Sir, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC) at this year's session. We greatly appreciate your leadership in the preparatory process for the session.

Allow me to share some thoughts on how to move multilateral disarmament from a long-time standstill to concrete action. Our common goal, as reiterated by President Obama in Berlin last year, is a world free of nuclear weapons. However, without a coherent and realistic approach, the goal might prove to be extremely distant.

Although not a specific topic for this UNDC session, let me refer to the ongoing efforts to dismantle, transport and ultimately destroy the Syrian chemical weapons arsenal. Much work is still to be done, yet we have already learned lessons that might prove beneficial to our efforts to reduce both the number and influence of other weapons of mass destruction. Jointly with Denmark, Norway is in the forefront of transporting the chemical agents out of Syria. We took on the task not least because we have an obligation to do our share in reducing the number of weapons of mass destruction

and ensuring that they are never again used against the Syrian population, or any other. Costs notwithstanding, this is meaningful work. It is practical and effective.

The United Nations and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) are our foremost partners in these efforts through the joint mission. Operational cooperation is now very good. This is truly an innovative way of carrying out the task. Let me add, however, that all member countries have a responsibility to do their part in ensuring that this important disarmament operation will be concluded in a timely and effective manner.

The recent Nuclear Security Summit was a success, not least because of its hands-on approach, bringing decision-makers together in concrete case studies and exercises. It raised awareness by highlighting our common challenges and pointing the direction before us. Our leaders went home with a clear and realistic view of the tasks ahead.

A realistic and fact-based understanding was also the goal of the Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons held in Oslo last year, where we looked carefully at the humanitarian impact of nuclear detonations. Mexico provided a follow-up conference this year, giving us an even broader understanding of the topic on the factual and expert levels. The prime task ahead of us now is to ensure a positive outcome of the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, building on what was achieved in the 2010 action plan for nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation. Not least, we hope to see progress on the issue of the establishment of a Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction.

The ongoing negotiations between the P5+1 countries and Iran on the Iranian nuclear programme are promising. As challenging as the talks are, a long-term deal might be within reach. In parallel, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and Iran have reached a framework agreement with a view to resolving all outstanding issues. Furthermore, the relevance of the Agency is proved by its role in verifying that parties to the intermediate agreement between the P5+1 and Iran abide by its terms. The IAEA will also play a central role in verifying a future long-term agreement.

Verification is essential to sustaining the nuclear non-proliferation regime. Norway maintains the need to universialize the comprehensive safeguards agreement and the additional protocol. However, verification is also key to any future arms reduction process. The international community needs assurances that what has been agreed to is actually carried through. Verification is the essence of transparency and confidence-building measures. It is in our interest to develop the verification tools and procedures needed, and thereby to prepare for the day when we reach new milestone agreements in arms control and arms reductions. Norway will continue to actively support the development of sound and trustworthy verification systems. The United Kingdom-Norway initiative, highlighted today by our United Kingdom colleague, is one good example of how to move that agenda forward.

Conventional arms control regimes are concrete tools for verification and information-sharing. They enhance confidence and trust on sunny days, paving the way for better understanding, and ultimately better decision-making, should a cloudy day emerge. Starting with the Helsinki process in the 1970s, there is an extensive track record in Europe benefitting from our conventional arms control regimes. Open Skies flights and Vienna Document inspections are conducted regularly, even now during times of crisis. As international relations develop and technology evolves, it is paramount to renew and adapt these regimes to the changing security environment. The Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe has served us well for many years. It is therefore important to strike a new balance that provides a formula for an effective regime for the decades to come as well.

As the examples I have given underscore, multilateral approaches to non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament are essential. Multilateral organizations and initiatives outside traditional forums have a role to play both as stakeholders pushing the agenda and as verifiers on behalf of a concerned global community. However, those goals will be lost should we not be able to reinvent ourselves and the way we conduct our work. The impasse of the international disarmament machinery falls way short of expectations and needs. That is why we must do our utmost to reach a positive conclusion of this year's UNDC.

The Chair: We have heard the last speaker inscribed on the list for this morning.

I now call on those representatives who wish to speak in exercise of the right of reply. I remind them that the number of statements in the exercise of this right

is limited to two by a delegation. The first statement should be limited to 10 minutes and the second to 5 minutes.

Mr. Aho (United States of America): The United States would like to speak in response to some comments that were made in yesterday afternoon's meeting (see A/CN.10/PV.338) regarding North Korea. I will just make a few points that largely reiterate things that we have echoed in this forum before.

The paramount goal of United States policy remains the verifiable denuclearization of the Korean peninsula in a peaceful manner. We will not accept North Korea as a nuclear-armed State. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea committed on numerous occasions, including in the September 2005 Joint Statement issued at the fourth round of the Six-Party Talks, to abandoning all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programmes. We will continue to hold the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to those commitments and its international obligations. We have long made clear that the United States remains open to authentic and credible negotiations to implement the Joint Statement of 19 September 2005 and to bring North Korea into compliance with applicable Security Council resolutions through irreversible steps leading to denuclearization. But the onus is on North Korea to first take meaningful actions towards denuclearization.

Finally, North Korea's nuclear programmes will not make the country more secure. The only way for North Korea to achieve the security and prosperity it seeks is by complying with its international obligations and commitments, including to denuclearize and to refrain from further provocations.

Mr. Ri Tong Il (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): I carefully followed the remarks made by the representatives of the United States and France concerning so-called provocations from 2013 to 2014 related to the rhetoric of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. In that regard, let me first touch on the matter of the remarks made by the representative of France.

I want to ask one very simple question. The representative of France referred to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea actions as a provocation. What about the United States, which has engaged in nuclear blackmail over six decades, starting with the 1950 Korean War? Yesterday (see A/CN.10/PV.338), I touched on the issue of reunions of families separated because of the nuclear blackmail initiated by General MacArthur and President Truman of the United States, affecting 10 million separated families. I want to give examples.

First, at the time of the Korean War, these policymakers made a decision to drop nuclear weapons on the civilian population, as they did on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, barely five years after committing those crimes of genocide. Was that act not provocation?

Secondly, on the reconciliation proposals, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea National Defence Commission made very serious reconciliation proposals that included halting joint hostile military acts. We went so far as to suggest that if the military exercises were such valuable exercises they could be undertaken, but not on our land — not on the Korean peninsula but on the United States' own land. They should not be done at our doorstep. Is not the fact that the United States simply ignored our proposal another provocation?

Thirdly, the United States began deploying in South Korea B-52 bombers capable of carrying a nuclear bomb. That was done at a time when the North and South of Korea were holding a dialogue concerning the issue of separated family reunions. But the United States made a very serious provocation in the eyes of our fellow countrymen of the Korean peninsula and of the international community. Is that not provocation?

Finally, the United States launched joint military drills while the separated family reunions were being held in Mount Kumgang/Diamond Mountain. So I want the representative of France to give a frank and open answer.

As for the remarks made by the representative of the United States, he touched first upon the Joint Statement of 19 September and the fact that the United States will not recognize the Democratic People's Republic of Korea as a nuclear-weapon State. We do not care whether the United States recognizes it or not — the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is a nuclear-weapon State.

The representative of the United States gave the wrong impression that the Joint Statement of 19 September contains only the commitments of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. I recommend that he carefully study the elements of the commitments. The two key players — the United States and the

Democratic People's Republic of Korea — have shared commitments. The United States is the perpetrator of nuclear blackmail against nationals of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and fellow countrymen of the Korean peninsula, and the Joint Statement is a commitment to not carry out a hostile policy against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and to give up nuclear blackmail against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. It is a written commitment.

The United States has never honoured the commitment, but has instead listed the Democratic People's Republic of Korea as part of the axis of evil. Secretary of State Kerry recently designated the Democratic People's Republic of Korea as an evil country. He made evil remarks against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea by naming the Democratic People's Republic of Korea an evil country. So I recommend that he carefully study the content of his words.

Furthermore, the representative of the United States talked about our compliance with Security Council resolutions, which we have totally rejected. We have never recognized them. They are a manipulation of the veto power of the United States as a so-called permanent member of the Security Council. One such resolution raised the issue of our satellite launch, and we therefore had no option but to show our determination and readiness to defend our sovereignty, as a sovereign State, and to fully exercise our right as State party to the Outer Space Treaty. The United States has no right to block our exercise, so therefore the resolution is totally illegal and absolute nonsense. The United States is the one that should be punished under the Security Council resolutions and should be held more accountable than anybody else.

Concerning the question of the prosperity of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea with nuclear weapons, the United States does not need to worry about the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's prosperity. The United States has imposed heinous pressure over six decades through sanctions. It has imposed over 40 different kinds of sanctions on the people of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea since 1945, when the Democratic People's Republic of Korea was founded. That has only made the people of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea even more determined and more united around their leadership. Nuclear deterrence will make our strong country prosperous and very powerful. So once again I tell the representative of the United States not to worry about the prosperity of our people.

The meeting rose at 12.15 p.m.